The PREVENTION CONNECTION
NEWSLETTER

Developmental Tasks and Rites of Initiation

Traditionally, the transition from childhood to adulthood was marked by an intense transformational experience. Anthropologists call this a *rite of passage*, or more specifically, a *rite of initiation*. Many hold that initiation is such a significant feature of the transformation from childhood to adulthood that if the culture does not provide adequate transformational activities of sufficient intensity, those making the transition will develop their own.

Rites of passage have been practiced in many indigenous cultures throughout the world as part of the transition from one social status in the community to another. These transitions include marriage, birth, death, becoming a sacred or political leader. Rites of passage are based on cultural experiences shared by all members of the culture and serve multiple functions, including recognition of the transition to a new status, reaffirmation of the social order, and the beginning of new privileges and responsibilities. In indigenous societies, where institutionalized transitional rites were practiced, virtually everyone held common religious, moral, political, and sexual values. Societal change was slow and identity easy to achieve. Normative expectations were enforced by direct social pressure. The young person built a life structured around the only social norms and values that he or she had ever known.

A ceremony such as a rite of passage or rite of initiation is based upon a rich and complex set of developmental, psychological and social processes. Socially-sanctioned and transformational rites of passage include trials in a series of areas, development of practical skills and achievement of a community identity.

Self-destructive behaviors commonly associated with adolescence may be the result of a need for a rite of passage, and may reflect society's message about adult behavior. By engaging in these behaviors, adolescents attempt to gain the sense that they have achieved adulthood.

Although the lives of American youth are still ordered by societal norms, there is less pressure for conformity than in the past. Society has become more tolerant of a wider range of behaviors, regardless of age. The problem is not that we do not have clear expectations about what adult-

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Rites of Passage

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The Jan and Vicki Column

As we usher in the year 2001, we are reminded that a variety of traditions and expressions are exercised to celebrate the transition from one year to another. Usually, a sip of bubbly is what first comes to mind. When viewed through a child's lens, a first drink is often what will mark the perceived transition from childhood to adulthood. Healthy rites of passage are important for our youth. Obtaining a driver's license, exercising the right to vote, graduating from high school and getting a job, secondary education or military service are some of the coming-of-age events teens have in common. In absence of healthy events, teens may choose activities such as a first drink or cigarette to define this important change. This issue of the *Prevention Connection* helps define and delineate the different kinds of rituals that denote passage from childhood to adulthood in our contemporary world.

We want to thank all of you who have so graciously written articles for this newsletter. The insight and experiences of the authors whose work shines through these pages—as well as all of those whose work has appeared in prior issues—serve as invaluable resources, allowing the *Prevention Connection* to be a meaningful tool to helping children and families in Montana.

Building a prevention system, one piece at a time.

Jan and Vicki

Notes From the Edge

Facing the Crooked Smile

By Erin Jemison, PRC VISTA Leader

I was born with partial Bells Palsy. It gave me what I always saw as my personal cross to bear—a lopsided smile. In an attempt to release myself from this cross, I opted for a surgical procedure in high school . . . one that proved unsuccessful, leaving a prominent scar as evidence. Only in the past few years have I finally begun to know that this burden is truly my blessing—a blessing that has been my rite of passage.

Although it may not have been immediate, the disappointment and pain that came with the failing of that surgery launched me into adulthood. My entire childhood was spent waiting for that magical day when I could consider some sort of surgical correction for my face…in my mind, the day I would "turn pretty." That destination where something would finally be done about that ugly duckling feeling, those continual reality checks that I was not like all the other kids. With the disappearance of that destination came my realization that no doctor could take that feeling away. The love and acceptance I was looking for could not possibly come from without . . . it had to come from within.

I have finally taken the personal responsibility to embark upon an exploration of myself and the many effects that having Bells Palsy have had on my concept of that self. It is never easy, and at times, it feels too hard to continue. Understanding the extent to which I do not allow love, others' and my own, into my heart, and the self-destruction that often follows, can be devastating. But it is up to me to turn my crooked smile and permanent scar into motivation to find the love for myself that some people never journey toward. The pain I have found along every step of my journey is eye-opening and empowering. There is no greater challenge, and no greater reward, than self-mastery.

Last month, I received a birthday card from my mom that gives me perspective on this journey. What follows is a small segment of what she wrote:

"Your road has not been easy. I've always thought you've handled your facial paralysis well. It has only been in the past several years that I've learned how awful it's been for you. Your father and I both wish that there could be something we could do about it. To watch you struggle with how you perceive yourself is hard for us. But it's making you a stronger person. Hopefully, one day you will feel that you *are* the beautiful person the rest of us see."

Reaching the concept of myself that I am grasping for will be a life-long process that, with ebbs and flows, will require constant energy and strength. Accepting that and engaging in it with an open heart and an open mind, is the challenge any real adult faces. As slow going as it is, it is one that I try to face each day with a smile . . . crooked and all.

Notes From the Edge

On Becoming a Man

By Aaron Lessen, PRC VISTA

In this day and time, when general culture offers few meaningful rites of passage for young adults, religion remains one source of positive and constructive coming of age experiences. In the Jewish religion, the Bar Mitzvah (for boys) and the Bat Mitzvah (for girls) serve as important life cycle events. According to Jewish law, children are not required to observe the commandments until the age of 13 (for boys) or 12 (for girls). This transition is marked by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. The rights of leading and counting as part of a religious service, of forming binding contracts and marrying come with the responsibility. No ceremony is technically required to mark the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, yet rather elaborate ceremonies have evolved. Today, Bar/Bat Mitzvahs usually involve months of preparation and study, which culminate in the honor of leading and participating in certain parts of a religious service, as well as receptions and parties given in celebration of the occasion.

Nine years after my Bar Mitzvah, I am able to look back and reflect on what the ceremony and celebration meant to me. It is not so much the actual ceremony and the religious emphasis that stick in my mind, but rather the months of preparation and anticipation leading up to the ceremony, and the sense of pride and accomplishment that came afterward. The way I think of my Bar Mitzvah is similar to the way I think of my high school and college graduations. The ceremony itself was significant . . . something to be shared with friends and family, but the truly important aspect was the work that went into preparing for the occasion. The process was long and involved, requiring a great deal of hard work and self-discipline. This preparation also united me with others who were going through the same experience. In addition to helping me feel connected to other young adults, the experience gave me a strong sense of belonging to my community. The Bar Mitzvah ceremony was a source of pride for my entire family. Being congratulated by the congregation of my synagogue created a powerful sense of accomplishment. And I clearly remember the enormous sense of relief and happiness that followed the ceremony as a successful culmination of all my hard work and preparation.

In a day of increasing secularity and decreasing religious faith, the experience of my Bar Mitzvah remains an enormously positive life experience. While receiving my driver's license at sixteen and being able to drink alcohol at twenty-one have been "rites of passage" that involved transitions from one stage of life to another, my Bar Mitzvah was a truly challenging and rewarding experience that resulted in genuine personal growth. At the time of my Bar Mitzvah, I may have complained about all the work and preparation; nine years later I remember the occasion with far more fondness than I could ever attach to my first solo drive or legal drink of alcohol.

Year 2001
Prevention Connection

May 2001

Drugs of the New Millennium (alcohol, ecstasy and methamphetamines)

August 2001

American Indian Issues

November 2001

Best Practices

Do you have something to add to the discussion about these issues? If so, please contact Editor Sherrie Downing or Co-coordinators Vicki Turner or Jan Lombardi with suggestions for articles. We've *all* got a piece of the puzzle.

Wise Guys
A program for 10–19 year old "Wise Guys"

The Wise Guys Male Responsibility Curriculum is designed to prevent adolescent pregnancy by teaching young males self-responsibility in several areas, primarily in the area of sexual development. After engaging in Wise Guys classes, participants have displayed positive changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. Of particular note are positive changes in the use of birth control and communication with parents and teachers about sex. Changes in these focus areas remained at higher than pre-program levels after six months.

WHO IS A WISE GUY?

A GUY who knows himself has . . .
- *A positive self-image*
- *Clear personal values*
- *An understanding of sexuality*

A GUY who knows where he is going . . .
- *Sets goals*
- *Makes wise decisions*
- *Communicates well*

A GUY who knows how to get there . . .
- *Avoids stereotyping*
- *Works with his parents and plans for his future*
- *Makes wise decisions about sex*

Wise Guys Mission/Goals

— *To empower young men with the knowledge they need to aid them in future decision-making.*

— *To encourage respect for themselves, as well as others.*

— *To help young men understand the importance of male responsibility, especially in the area of sexuality.*

— *To help young men improve communication with their parents, peers and others.*

For more information about the Wise Guys Program, or to inquire about train-the-trainer sessions, contact:

Family Life Council of Greater Greensboro, Inc.
Web address: www.wiseguysnc.org

Societies that practiced formal rites of passage that lasted only a few days or a week did not allow for a not boy/not man, not girl/not woman existence. That is why the transitional stage is considered one of "limnality "– not belonging. American society has more tolerance for an in-between stage and calls it adolescence . . . a stage which is neither child or adult. What used to take a couple of weeks now slowly transpires over ten years. In this case, the ceremony facilitates transcendence or entering a new moral order or confirmation. The ceremony becomes a celebration.

The Five Goals of the ICC

Reduce child abuse and neglect by promoting child safety and healthy family functioning.

Reduce youth use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs by promoting alternate activities and healthy lifestyles.

Reduce youth violence and crime by promoting the safety of all citizens.

Increase the percentage of Montana high school students who successfully transition from school to work, post-secondary education, training and/or the military.

Reduce teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases by promoting the concept that sexual activity, pregnancy and child rearing are serious responsibilities.

Developmental Tasks

Continued from cover

hood means for our children. Rather, we have not prepared our children to deal with the range of options open to them. Training during adolescence needs to focus on building the confidence necessary to make good decisions in an ever-changing arena.

In his report, *Developmental Tasks and Adventure-based Education*, Jim Thormahlen breaks the skills, abilities and tests necessary for successful navigation of adolescence into Eleven Developmental Tasks. He states that it is virtually impossible to develop a competent, responsible adult identity without meeting the challenge of each developmental task.

If transition is to be successful, rites of passage, and especially rites of initiation, must be built upon clear foundations. To be told that you're an adult before you've developed the skills for successful adulthood is to be told a lie, perhaps the most damaging lie of all.

The Eleven Developmental Tasks

1. ***Achieving mature relations with age-mates of both sexes***
2. ***Achieving a social gender identity***
3. ***Accepting one's physique and using one's body effectively***
4. ***Achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults***
5. ***Achieving economic independence from parents***
6. ***Preparing for a committed relationship/marriage and family life***
7. ***Selecting and preparing for an occupation***
8. ***Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behavior***
9. ***Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior***
10. ***Developing intellectual skills***
11. ***Accepting one's ethnicity***

Transitional celebration, such as high school graduation, confirm the new identity that has been transforming throughout adolescence. To conceive of high school graduation as the culmination of adolescence is to assume that high school has addressed all eleven developmental tasks, when actually it has only addressed a few. It takes time, conviction and support to complete all of the tasks necessary to make the transition to healthy adulthood.

Source: Thormalen, Jim. "Developmental Tasks and Adventure Based Education." Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.

2000 MONITORING THE FUTURE SURVEY RELEASED

Moderating Trend Among Teen Drug Use Continues

Overall use of illicit drugs among teenagers remained unchanged from last year, according to the 26th annual Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF) released by the Department of Health and Human Services. The 2000 survey of drug use among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders found that illicit drug use, including the use of marijuana, generally remained unchanged in the last year. The survey marks the fourth year in a row that the use of any illicit drugs among teenagers has stayed level or declined in all categories: lifetime, past year and past month use.

The lack of transitional rites in the United States is frequently blamed upon the development of industrialized society, but there are other reasons. The United States melds a wide variety of cultures that have differing norms, mores, and practices. With few exceptions, formal rites of passage develop in homogeneous societies that share a unified value system. Many indiginous societies engage in initiations, which range from the ancient Native American rite of stealing horses and engaging in a vision quest to the New Guinea ritual of diving head first off of a high tower (original bungee jumping). In these cultures, no period of development similar to adolescence is observed: children are initiated directly into adulthood.

In the United States, the transition into adulthood is slow, lasting nine or ten years (ages 12 to 21+). In many cases this period is sustained by continued dependence throughout the college years. That's a long time to wait to gain the privileges of adulthood.

The transition period of adolescence often involves risk-taking. The classic picture that comes to mind is James Dean in *Rebel Without A Cause*, playing "chicken" with his hotrod against another adolescent. Adolescents devise ways to take risks, which may involve driving fast, drinking, sex, drugs, rebellion, shoplifting or other dangerous activities. It can be inferred that risk-taking behavior is a form of self-designed ritual or rite, delivering passage into adulthood. To survive risk while facing fear and anxiety is a route to a healthier self-image and to the sense of becoming an adult. Without guidance, such activities can be destructive or even fatal.

Choreographing supervised and safer opportunities for adolescents to take risks is preferable to leaving them to create their own. Through *adventure education* and *adventure-based counseling*, adolescents face and overcome anxiety, take risks and develop a positive self-concept without risking injury or death. The key is *perceived risk*. Adventure-based education and counseling incorporate the use of metaphor and perceived risk to teach the skills necessary to effectively navigate life's challenges. Climbing a mountain can be metaphorically compared to reaching goals. Belaying another student is literally and metaphorically giving support and taking responsibility for another's life. Running a river can be compared to the course of any relationship. Participation in activities that contain an element of perceived risk require the individual to use personal competence in facing fear and ultimately coming to the resolution with the uncertainty of potential outcomes. In dealing directly with challenges and by turning perceived limitations into abilities, by transforming perceived risks into successes, adolescents learn a great deal about their relationships with others and with themselves.

In Whitefish, our efforts to create a safe environment for metaphorical learning has resulted in the Soar Program. Soar is an acronym for nothing but a symbol for much. This comprehensive educational program adheres to the philosophy of experiential learning. This program has been developed to serve the needs of Whitefish High School students as well as the citizens of the Flathead Valley. The emphasis is on learning by doing, and the experiences provided are followed by an opportunity for individual and group reflection. Participants are guided to avenues for growth through the exploration of individual limitations and strengths in a physically and emotionally safe, yet challenging environments.

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Soar

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Research has demonstrated that when individuals are taken out of their comfort zones and placed at what appears to be physical, emotional or social risk, personal development is fostered and enhanced. Participants become more aware of their actions, thoughts, feelings, and behavior patterns. While processing these experiences, they are given feedback, the opportunity to explore options, practice alternatives, and learn new skills. Ultimately, through transfer of these skills, individuals can go on to achieve success in an ever-changing and challenging society.

Adventures in Personal Development is currently offered at three Whitefish schools: Whitefish High School (all grades), Central School (8th grade), and the Independent (alternative) High School. Throughout the adventure program experience, students have the time to learn and enhance fundamental skills inherent in the eleven developmental tasks of adolescence (see front page article). These developmental tasks include: respect for self and others, integrity, positive and effective communication, conflict resolution, problem solving, teamwork, self-reliance/self-direction, responsibility, compassion, supporting others, and constructive coping.

> ***"I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand."***
>
> ***Confucius***

Lessons in all eleven skill areas are facilitated through adventure activities including: indoor and ground level initiatives and games; climbing wall; portable and low ropes challenge course initiatives; high ropes challenge course initiatives; one day field trips; rock climbing, river running, cross country skiing; and group discussions, role playing, and group processing.

Soar workshops are also offered to Flathead Valley non-profit agencies under the strict guidance and facilitation of a Soar instructor. Organizations are asked to establish goals prior to program implementation. Soar instructors then design a curriculum that fits the needs of participants. Goals are often similar to those set for the school-based program.

Risk may fill an unmet need for rites of passage that guide adolescents from childhood to adulthood, or may be an inherent component of adolescent behavior. Whatever role risk-taking plays in the developmental process, it is our responsibility as adults to embrace our youth, and to provide safe and healthy opportunities that contain an element of risk. In this way, we can help enable a natural transition from childhood to adulthood.

Resources

Initiation—Saying Good-Bye to Childhood, *by Rachael Kessler, pp.30-33,* Educational Leadership*, December 1999/January 2000*

"Positive rites of passage for young people are sorely lacking in today's society—with negative consequences for all of us. Two programs show how educators can address this need and guide students along the road from adolescence to responsible adulthood." (30)

Great Transitions Preparing Adolescents For A New Century *by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1995.*

The core recommendations from the Carnegie Council were to: "reengage families with their adolescent children, create developmentally appropriate schools for adolescents, develop health-promotion strategies for young adolescents, strengthen communities with young adolescents, and promote the constructive potential of the media." (pp.12-14)

Safe Passage: Making It Through Adolescence In A Risky Society *by Joy Dryfoos, Oxford University Press, New York, 1998.*

"Safe Passage . . . *focuses primarily on successful efforts that help young people to emerge from their childhoods as responsible adults. The major premise here is that this society has access to programs that work to assure that adolescents achieve "Safe Passage"—programs in schools and community agencies; programs that involve all kinds of youth workers; programs supported by local, state, and federal public and private resources." (ix)*

Preventing Teen Traffic Accidents

Bozeman Chronicle

Getting a driver's license is undoubtedly a rite of passage for Montana teens. A license to drive means mobility, new freedom, a step toward adulthood. Unfortunately, our youngest drivers are also the drivers most likely to crash. That fact has led about half of the 50 states to enact some form of "graduated driver's license," placing special parameters on driving privileges for drivers under the age of 18.

— *Sixteen-year-old drivers are three times more likely to be involved in a crash than are 17-year-olds, according to Montana's Safe Kids Campaign. Sixteen-year-olds are five times more likely to be in a crash than 18-year-old drivers, and twice as likely to crash as 85-year-old drivers.*

State Representative Kim Gillan, D-Billings, and State Senator Lorents Grosfield, R-Big Timber, have requested separate drafts of legislation for graduated drivers' licenses. They plan to discuss combining their ideas in a single bill that fits the Montana lifestyle and adds some safeguards against wrecks involving teenage drivers.

Rites of Passage in the Lives of GLBT Youth

By Andrew R. Laue, LCSW—Missoula, Montana

Woven into every culture are rites of passage that mark important developmental turnings in the lives of individuals. These rites of passage, when effective, serve to deepen the bonds of participation, forging individual experiences into a larger whole. Rites of passage work from the depths of a culture, and accomplish what prevention planning and programming have sought to do in conscious, planful, and external ways. Ritualized rites of passage are also necessary when planning effective primary prevention programming for GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered) youth. Involving families and developing traditions and rites are proactive measures that can have very positive effects on these high-risk adolescents.

We live in a time of radical change when it comes to the place of GLBT people in the life of the wider culture. The first brave voices of gay and lesbian liberation, which demanded political recognition and full inclusion, have created a groundswell from gays and lesbians now living boldly and openly throughout America. A major attitudinal shift is underway among the American populace—from seeing homosexuality as a disordered living pattern, judged by both church and state—toward recognizing that gays and lesbians are people who express the basic needs of humanity in unique, yet legitimate, ways. These include the need to be together rather than apart, the need to live in relationships of loving regard, and the need to participate deeply and widely in the broader community. This shift is in a very kinetic phases, and gay and lesbian reality has not become fully normed within context of the culture at large. This creates a profound ambivalence; the lack of support of the indigenous culture puts gay and lesbian youth at high risk.

Cultures worldwide recognize that adolescence is one of the most difficult stages in the spiral of human development. Fraught with feelings of chaotic sexuality, this time marks a period during which youth participate in actively forging relational and personal identity and begin to emerge from the shelter of childhood into the wider world. Adolescence is a dynamic time, and one rife with the potential to cause deep harm to the individual if the phase isn't successfully negotiated. Many rites of passage take place at this key point in human development in order to provide personal support as well as to ensure that the culture's deepest values become embedded.

This period in terms of gay and lesbian development marks a time of first engagement in the "coming out" drama. It is at this critical point that the individual is at his or her most vulnerable to the wider culture. The majority of American families still experience coming out as a crisis. The reversal of expectations that occurs at this point typically disables the family. Instead of providing the warm response necessary to the continued growth of the individual, family members become engaged in personal crises of recognition. Rather than forging a critical communal link, a crisis-based response frustrates the adolescent and creates a dangerous gap with the family and with the culture at large.

> ***Adolescence is a dynamic time, and one rife with the potential to cause deep harm to the individual if the phase isn't successfully negotiated.***

The frustrated need for recognition and affirmation does not disappear. In fact, it is this need unmet by the familiar culture that can send the youth

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Resources:

Youth Eastside Services *of Bellevue, Washington (YES) offers a diverse menu of teen, parenting and prevention resources. Visit their website at: http://www.youtheastsideservices.org./*

Bright Futures *is a practical, developmental approach to providing health supervision for children of all ages, from birth through adolescence. There is a good, downloadable manual on this website jam-packed with good information. http://www.brightfutures.org/*

Based on a nationally-representative survey of adults conducted by the Gallup Organization, a study from the Lutheran Brotherhood and Search Institute shows that across all demographic differences examined, Americans are united in their belief that it's important for adults to be positively engaged in the lives of children and teenagers. Yet few adults—we estimate only one in 20—are actively and consistently involved with kids.

The complete study as well as other information is available on Search Institute's web site at: http://www.search-institute.org/

GLBT Youth

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into a passionate search for recognition within the still alternative gay and lesbian urban culture. Receiving a response from the strong and capable gay and lesbian community can offer the best-case scenario for these youth, as this community has effectively created programs designed to receive youth. However, for the majority, a deep social stigma against homosexuality is not only resident in the familial cultures, but has been internalized. This can cause these youth to avoid identification with the gay and lesbian community.

At this point, the youth may attempt to gain access through riskier avenues, which can be painfully distorted by a sense of internalized oppression. For example, consider a gay youth whose parents met his coming-out attempt with a deep lack of understanding. This youth may be unable for a variety of reasons to access youth programs sponsored by a GLBT community center, and instead may begin to look for contact through the more surreptitious zones of public sex such as rest stops, public restrooms, or adult bookstores. Another scenario might include illegal entrance to a gay bar or club. There, the youth might find a sense of interpersonal acceptance, and yet that acceptance would be in an unhealthy environment defined by the use of alcohol and/or other substances. Youth at this stage of emotional development are highly vulnerable to individuals who have not come to terms with their own sexuality, but instead act on their own crippling, internalized homophobia to prey on half-actualized gay youth. This might be accomplished through direct contact – or via the Internet. In either case, the results can be a one-sided satisfaction of adult needs, rather than the growing openness and communication necessary to forge real relationships.

It is during this time of dramatic change that it is crucial for the prevention community to seek methods through which to support gay and lesbian adolescents. It is not enough for the GLBT Community alone to create avenues of recognition for gay youth. Rites of passage in this phase must focus on the individual's inclusion in the wider culture. We must encourage the entire community to legitimize the growth and emergence of *all* children. Gay and straight alliances reach toward the kind of communal linking that is at the heart of effective rites of passage.

Reflection on effective rites of passage for adolescents in general can serve as a guide for developing effective rites of passage for gay and lesbian youth. The senior prom in the school system, confirmation in the Christian church, celebrations around graduations and symbolic birthdays such as sixteen and eighteen are all good starting points that can bring youth in touch with storehouses of societal wisdom. Following is a list of elements necessary to ensure that GLBT youth are given safe passage through effective rites of passage.

— ***Acceptance by family*** is critical, and can help the youth make a successful transition to the wider culture. Up until this stage of development, the family has served as a refuge. If the family turns away during this key period—even if successful inclusion in the wider culture is achieved—a deep and abiding wound will be created. Harnessing the protective power of family strengthens the individual. Even one loving, accepting family member who will stand with the youth and serve as a link to the family and the wider culture through this time can be enough.

— ***Intergenerational participation*** is important because it symbolically enacts the celebration of a key event in the miraculous spiral of human development. In Latin cultures the Quinceanera, a symbolic presentation of fifteen-year-olds through ritualized celebration, is a special event attended by the entire community. Elders dining at tables while toddlers run among adolescents' legs during the dance represent participation in the wider, communal world. Ritual should include gay and straight elders in the community, as well as children. The inclusion of gay elders is key because it creates a

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A rite of passage *is a ritual that transports individuals from one state to another. The term* ***Rites of Passage*** *was first used by the Belgian anthropologist Arnold van Gennep.*

As a preliminary step, the rite is identified in civil customs (e.g., single to married, high school student to graduate) to create a societal understanding. Ritual is a common part of human experience. The Edin Toa *(Akan baby-naming ceremony), Sunrise Ceremonial (Apache coming-of-age ritual),* Mehendi *party (Pakistani pre-marital custom), and sitting* Shiva *(Jewish mourning tradition) are all traditions observing rites of passage. Although many of the traditions and rituals brought to this country have been lost, others continue to be practiced and in many cases are adapted to fit American values and lifestyles. Birthday parties, graduations, bachelor parties, funerals and retirement dinners mark common rites of passage in American life.*

GLBT Youth

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strong sense of hope and aspiration for the gay youth who often struggle to believe that they will be able to live full lives.

— ***Participation by representatives*** of the wider culture that includes school, church and community is important because it symbolizes all of the strong participatory bands necessary to negotiate a fully-engaged life. Public acknowledgment of ritualized acts is common in our culture –notices of engagement, marriage, and death are prime examples. Eliciting the support of representatives from these important social structures is key.

— ***Acknowledgement of the key themes*** stirring in this developmental phase (sexuality, individual identity as a continuous stream through change, the urge for individuation) is necessary for effective representation of the individual. The key component of this rite of passage is linking the individual's developing sexual awareness and dynamically-growing individual identity with the wider story of their development.

The problem with negotiating this terrain without family support is a tendency to lead with the power of sexuality to create change. This can result in a disintegrated self that always leads with sexuality. Sexuality becomes risky when split from the larger self in this way. Celebrating with frankness the truth of an adolescent's sexuality within context his larger self is essential. Consider, if you will, the frank sexuality of young women's prom dresses, purchased by their parents and celebrated by the entire culture through a ritualized dance. This is a good example of an effective integration of sexuality within the context of a rite of passage.

— ***Imprinting the values*** of the wider culture on the individual is key to any successful rite of passage. A rite of passage for gay and lesbian youth should guide them in developing a criteria for moral valuation and deep cultural participation. The culture's primary investment in the celebration of this transition is to create the deep and effective participation that furthers the life of the culture. Our culture has successfully exploited gay and lesbian people as a marketing niche, but has not yet become aware of the strengths that could be gained by encouraging full participation. Any rite of passage should visualize from an individual perspective the hope for positive cultural participation. Reflection on individual strengths and abilities and insight into how an individual can best offer his or her unique gifts for the good of the whole are primary goals of rites of passage.

These basic criteria provide a benchmark for the necessary development of a ritual structure that incorporates rites of passage for gay and lesbian youth. This gap must be filled through creative imagination and strong resolve. Rites of passage must start with recognition and acceptance by the family. After the family has adjusted to the truth an adolescent has shared, it becomes the family's job to actively support the individual within the wider culture. Through rituals of celebration, GLBT youth can be led to meet the challenges that will allow them to live in the culture and meet their own deepest possibilities. Once a family can learn to experience gay and lesbian children as a gift, and can stand with them in love, the first step toward effective rites of passage has already been taken. Primary prevention programs support parents with resources, guidance, and creative planning. Ultimately the goal is one that never varies—to help *all* families learn to celebrate the lives and growth of their children.

"Safe From the Start: Taking Action on Children Exposed to Violence" describes eight core principles:

1. ***Work Together:*** *Encouraging close coordination among all agencies and organizations that protect children or help children exposed to violence.*
2. ***Begin Earlier:*** *Placing increased emphasis on new parents and very young children.*
3. ***Think Developmentally:*** *Modifying efforts to best serve children in different age groups.*
4. ***Make Mothers Safe To Keep Children Safe:*** *Recognizing that child maltreatment and violence against women are closely related.*
5. ***Enforce the Law:*** *Ensuring accountability for offenders, including vigorous prosecution, tougher sentencing and aggressive follow-up.*
6. ***Make Adequate Resources Available:*** *Making better use of current resources while securing substantial and sustained financial investments from both the public and private sector.*
7. ***Work From a Sound Knowledge Base:*** *Making sure that efforts are based on solid research and that these efforts are thoroughly evaluated.*
8. ***Create a Culture of Nonviolence:*** *Working toward a larger social environment with no tolerance for violence, including resolving conflicts peacefully and increasing public awareness of the harm of children's exposure to violence.*

Resource:

Copies of ***"Safe From the Start: Taking Action on Children Exposed to Violence"*** *and information about other OJJDP publications, programs and conferences are available through the OJJDP Web site at http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ or the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse at 1-800-638-8736.*

Grief That Isolates, Grief That Unites, and Adults Who Make the Difference

By Linda Tracy, Missoula Demonstration Project: The Quality of Life's End

When someone we love dies, we must relearn our place in the world, our relationships to others, and even our identity. But imagine coping with this pain and uncertainty as a child who is still forging an identity. Imagine doing so largely unnoticed and unsupported. Children's experience of death and other losses can isolate them, leading to depression and behavior that insulates them against pain. These experiences can also offer great opportunities for caring adults to help children develop and practice lifelong coping skills. Such skills can help promote healing and protect children and youth from risk-taking behaviors.

Grief

Grief is the reaction to loss; mourning is the external expression of grief. The processes of grief mean readjusting to the personal environment after loss, and ultimately, beginning new relationships. If the needs that arise during this time are not acknowledged or met, this process can be interrupted. Instead of moving through loss, isolation can result, preventing connection with people or activities that gave life meaning, purpose, security and predictability.

"How kids work through the mourning process and grow from it is up to us," says nationally-known child grief expert, Maria Trozzi.[1] "We must be the guardian angels who illuminate the shadows and paths of loss so youngsters can understand, grieve, commemorate, and go on in the midst of emotional devastation and confusion . . . [O]ur work to help children accept death and other losses is about promoting life and loving relationships." In so doing, we help children develop skills that can increase their resiliency. Trozzi says that caring adults should be honest and open with children, provide safe and secure places to mourn, and model healthy mourning.

Forgotten Mourners

If we take time to ask, we often learn that kids have experienced incredible loss, and have already become adept at hiding loss from others. Using a simple survey, a Missoula school counselor was surprised to learn that more than 20 percent of her school's eighth graders had experienced the death of someone in their household.

Children can be isolated by grief over a death or a less evident loss, such as that caused by divorce, a move to another town, a change in financial circumstances, or by living with someone who has a serious illness. Caregiving demands can further isolate by redirecting a parent's focus and attention away from the child. Additionally, particularly after the death of a parent, a child can be isolated by the surviving parent's struggle with grief.

Grief expert Alan Wolfelt reminds us the experience of loss is individual and can be influenced by many circumstances surrounding a death.[2] These include the child's: age and understanding of death; physical/emotional condition; coping skills and support system; ethnic or cultural background; religious or spiritual background, beliefs, and experience; prior experiences with death and the time between deaths; actual or imagined responsibility for the death, and relationship to the deceased and the nature of that relationship.

The age of the person who dies and whether the death was sudden or anticipated are also critical factors.

Developmental Stages

Children's perceptions of death and manifestations of grief change as they grow and mature, and they may revert to the comforts of an earlier stage when confronted by loss. Children tend to grieve in spurts and to re-grieve the loss of a significant loved one through each stage of life.

Trozzi describes four stages of

[1]Maria Trozzi. *Talking with Children about Loss*
[2]Alan Wolfelt. *Healing the Bereaved Child*

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Selected Things Caring Adults Can Do to Help Children

— Help children find their own ways to commemorate a death or other loss. Formal and informal rituals can be powerful ways of coping because they help confirm the reality of the loss, express grief, and allow kids to transform the loss.

— Bring kids together who have experienced the death or serious illness of someone close. Learning that their feelings are normal and that others experience the same things can build connections and help dismantle isolation. KidsAid offers a virtual support group to children via the Internet at http://www.rivendell.com.

— Invite kids to talk about their losses. By listening to what they do and do not say, children can teach you what they need. Encourage them to tell stories about the person who died. Look at photographs or watch home videos together. Ask them to complete open-ended sentences out loud or in writing (e.g.,"Sometimes I wish that...", "Since my [dad] died . . ."). Encourage them to ask questions, then answer as openly and honestly as you can. Let them know there are some questions no one can answer.

— When a child doesn't want to talk about feelings, find other ways to be together. Use windshield time on longer car trips to talk about other things. Listen for needs, concerns and fears. Time spent making cookies or pizza together can reassure a child that you are there.

— Everyone needs a break from grief. Take time out—literally out. Go to a movie rather than rent a video. Take a walk and explore nature.

— Encourage kids to gather pictures and memorabilia around a seriously ill loved one's bedside or in a public part of the house after a death. These spark good memories and storytelling.

— Express your own grief as a means of allowing you to be more present to others. Model ways of constructively expressing anger and grief.

Grief

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children's understanding of death.

Preschool stage (3-5 years old): These children have only recently developed the ability to understand death, but see it as a different way of living (i.e., the deceased person is simply on a trip).

Latency stage (6-8 years old): Children this age understand death as permanent and irreversible, but not as universal. They often need to feel secure and be reassured. In both the preschool and latency stages, grief can manifest in aggressive and disruptive behavior. Setting limits with kindness helps. Check in often and ask children how they feel. Give them concrete ways to let you know when they feel bad.

Preadolescent stage (9-12 years old): At this age, children have an adult understanding of death, but fear abandonment and want to know how their world will change as a result of death. They may be interested in the biological aspects of death and in funeral terms and services. Ask if there is anything about the death that worries the child and probe for concerns the child may otherwise be reluctant to express.

Adolescents (13 years old plus): The impact of death on adolescents can threaten an emerging sense of independence and hope. While they can understand death on a cognitive level, as an adult can, they feel personally invincible and immortal. The death of a friend may only temporarily shatter this feeling. At this age, youth may become philosophical, asking, "Why her and not me?" They may also feel helpless and overwhelmed. Trozzi suggests using teachable moments to communicate authentically and truthfully about death and its part of the natural cycle of life. The death of a pet or a national figure and television programs with end-of-life themes offer good opportunities.

Preadolescents and adolescents may be reticent to show emotions as they work to maintain safety and control of their world. They may fear being abandoned by adults or that significant adults will become incapacitated and unable to care for them. They do not want to be seen as "different."

Caring adults can help adolescents understand death by providing a brief, clear account of what happened, thus derailing any incorrect assumptions or rumors. Teens should be encouraged to talk to others who have experienced death. KidsAid, a web site connecting kids to other kids experiencing loss, offers safe, on-line support groups (http://www.rivendell.com). Adults should be aware that teens might want to grieve with their peers. Friends of an adolescent who died may find comfort in a second memorial gathering just for kids.

Help teens find constructive ways to express their feelings. Singing, poetry, journal writing and drawing provide creative outlets. Rituals that reflect the deceased person, the relationship shared with surviving children or youth, and discussions of what is meaningful can help teens develop lifelong coping skills. Friends of a Missoula teenager who died honored him by hiking up Mount Jumbo to rearrange the white-painted rocks from a giant "L" into their friend's name. Other informal rituals might involve lighting a candle, dedicating a tree or event, making a memorial shrine, or releasing a paper boat or helium balloon.

Children learn from watching and imitating those around them. Let kids know it is all right to express anger and sadness. By modeling healthy mourning, we can help children and youth at any stage see that it is normal to grieve and that expressing feelings doesn't keep us from caring for them. Helping children acknowledge their losses, supporting them as they work through their grief, and providing permission and secure places to grieve, all help children accept death and other losses throughout life.

The Missoula Demonstration Project: the Quality of Life's End is a non-profit research and community engagement organization working to show that a community-based approach of excellent physical, psychosocial and spiritual care improves the quality of the end of life. See: http://www.missoula demonstration.org.

Selected Support Resources

— *Contact your local hospice for* **bereavement support groups and services**. *Funeral homes may also provide support or referrals.*

— *Families First in Missoula annually offers the* **Seasons Program** *to families that have experienced a death, and a* **Camp to Remember**, *a summer bereavement camp for grieving children ages 8 -14. (406) 721 7690*

— *The* **Growth House** *web site provides extensive links to resources on end-of-life issues. It lists details of 34 web sites and books to help children with illness and grief. http://www.growthhouse.org. Select the Grief and Bereavement subpage and then select the "helping children grieve" section.*

— *Trozzi, Maria.* **Talking with Children about Loss: Words, Strategies, and Wisdom to Help Children Cope with Death, Divorce, and Other Difficult Times**. *Berkeley: A Perigee Book, 1999. This key reference uses case histories to illustrate how children perceive loss and grieve at different developmental stages offering concrete methods and model language to help children develop coping skills.*

— *Wolfelt, Alan.* **Healing the Bereaved Child: Grief Gardening, Growth through Grief and other Touchstones for Caregivers**. *Fort Collins: Companion Press, 1996. Wolfelt's primer on children's grief uses gardening as a metaphor. Among other resources, it includes model activities for a 10-meeting children's support group, ideas for rituals, and chapters on grieving children in school and adolescent needs.*

Touching the Spirit and Feeling the Resonance of Our Rites of Passage

By Darren Bearshild Melton

The Awareness

Rites of Passage . . . these words are almost primal in their implication and meaning. For some they invoke thought and comment. For others, nothing at all. In all honesty, it's not a term we hear everyday, nor is it a centerpiece of national debate. It's certainly not a term instantly recognizable in millions of American households.

That said, this article is not about defining rites of passages. It is about raising awareness of the ripples and impacts they make in our lives, among those whom we love and those with whom we work . . . and the huge impact they have on our developmental (mental, physical, psychological, and spiritual) growth as youth and adults.

The Foundation

No matter what your belief is of how we got here or even where we go when we leave this place, there are two things that are universal. We have a spirit (or soul, or whatever term you like) and a body. The spirit gives life to the body and in turn the body allows the spirit to experience a physical life.

Because we are people of spirit and body, we are related, and therefore we are connected. This is a theme repeated in many traditional Indian (Native American) beliefs, and others I am sure. Whatever the source of the belief—or even if you don't subscribe to these concepts—there is a simple truth here. Everything we are is built on the concept of being interconnected.

If I could stop to look back at you as you read this, I would probably see you wanting to ask the question resting on the edge your lips, "What does this have to do with Rites Of Passage?" The answer, of course, is *everything*! All cultures, languages, traditions and everything else we use to describe, present, and define who we are . . . have been sustained by and rooted in the foundation of spirit and body.

The Resonance

Now that we have an awareness of the foundation, what's next? Well, that's not such an easy question to answer. Roll your eyes if you must, but the truth is that we all experience growth, learning and teaching in different ways. Then we add our families, communities, cultures and social values into the mix . . . and, well, you get the idea. It's a complex dynamic.

But we don't usually think and feel in terms of those complexities. We think and feel in more basic terms. The times we seem to remember most, those that have the biggest impact in our lives, were those that generated a resonance inside.

You know the times. Everything was in its place and worked like it was supposed to, as if designed by some unseen hand. A place where everything clicked and the people you were with knew it and felt it. The beauty is that while experiencing rites of passage, we really aren't aware until near the end, when there is finally recognition that a life-changing experience has occurred. There is no substitute for the real thing. You either resonate or you don't, and you know it in your heart and soul.

In my personal and professional life, I have been fortunate to be part of groups that have experienced resonance. This is where being interconnected really comes back into play, especially within a group, because resonance is amplified by the number of people involved. It's an amazing experience.

But I have also been involved with other groups in the exact same environment, groups that never came close to reaching that level of interconnectedness. These groups were still productive and accomplished what they were supposed to, but lacked the breadth and depth of the other experiences.

The main thing to keep in mind is that it does not matter if you are one or part of a group of a thousand, we resonate at individual levels and send ripples out to everything around us.

The Ripple

Again, we come to a point of awareness . . . aware of those times when we are presented with opportunities to make a difference. Knowing and recognizing the ripples that emanate from us is important, but it's just as important to be able to see the ripples coming toward us.

But not all ripples are right for us to experience. Some ripples can be destructive to who we are. Fools Crow, a Lakota Spiritual Leader, once said " . . . prevention cannot stop us from being hurt, but can keep us from being destroyed."

There is a lot of truth in those words. Most hold the belief that if we build walls and sit encased within them, we cannot be hurt. But pulling a plant up by the roots, refusing it water and sunlight, is never a workable approach to life.

Life is about interrelatedness and being connected. It's about movement and the flow and exchange of energy. It's about being resilient and able to handle transitional changes well. It's about living to the fullest as individuals and as a collective whole.

Perhaps this is the biggest rite of passage we face as human beings . . . freeing ourselves from all that keeps us from becoming what we have dreamt we could be, and strengthening everything that sustains the dream.

Darren is Chair of the Helena Indian Alliance Board Of Directors. He spent seven years in the field of prevention. He is of Cherokee descent and studied with the late Eddie Barbeau, a local Ojibwa Elder, for six years.

Crow Naming Ceremony

As told by Marvella Grey Bull and Ada L. Bends—Crow mother of Eagle Man

The Crow Nation has many traditions that are still actively used today. One of the traditions is the Naming Ceremony. This is a very important ceremony for the Crows, as it strengthens the continuity of the traditions and our way of life for future generations to come.

Crows have a clan system, and when a Crow child is born, he or she automatically is born into the mother's clan, and becomes a "kid" of the father's clan. For example, my son, Chaz, was born into my clan—the Thick Lodge Clan. Because his father is not a member of the Crow Tribe, Chaz is a kid of my father's clan, the Whistling Water Clan. We use my clan lineage so that Chaz will have clan aunts and uncles who are active in his life.

The naming of a child can happen in two ways. In the first year of the child's life, the parents will go to a clan aunt, uncle, grandmother or grandfather and ask that their child be given a Crow Indian name. By providing a good strong name in the Crow language, the child will be assisted toward a life of prosperity, a good life. The name will also help other members of the Nation to know the child is.

A Crow name is taken very seriously. It is believed that the name gives the child/person the foundation that leads to spiritual, mental, physical and emotional strength, both individually and among the Crow people. The clan aunt or uncle prays about the request for a child's name. It can take up to a year for a Crow name to be given to the child, but once the child receives a name, the parents prepare a feast and invite family and clan members. After the feast, the story behind the choice of the name is shared. Afterward, the child is taken to the person who has named him or her. The name is announced for the first time, and said several times for the people. In appreciation, the parents and family give gifts to the person who named the child. The camp crier calls the child's name in Crow again, and requests that this child be always called by the new Crow name.

Sometimes, a parent is given the child's Crow name in a dream before the child is born. Then the parent goes to the clan uncle or aunt and shares this dream, as described below in *Eagle Man is Coming*.

It is an honor to receive a Crow name. To have a Crow name signifies the child's identity in the family, clans, societies, communities and the Crow Nation. After the naming, the child is called by the Crow name each morning as the sun comes up, for it is believed that this makes the child strong and is blessed by the new day for a good life.

Eagle Man is Coming

A Crow mother's naming of her son

I was a month into my pregnancy when I was blessed with a wonderful dream. In this dream, I found myself in the Big Horn mountains in Wyoming, at the Medicine Wheel. It was a beautiful summer day, the skies were a turquoise blue, the sun was shining, and there were no clouds in the sky. To my right was a valley, and on the mountainside a very old pine tree. On the limb of the tree sat a mother bald eagle, and next to her was her baby eagle, fluttering his wings. He was about a year old. The young bald eagle was preparing for his first flight, and his mother stood patiently, waiting for her son to take off. Then, through the valley, the wind came and picked up the young bald eagle, and he began to fly with the wind through the valley below. The mother eagle watched as her young son flew strongly through the valley of the Big Horn Mountains. Through the wind, so gently yet so very strong, they called him . . . *Eagle Man, Eagle Man, Eagle Man, Eagle Man*. Four times they called him. This was important, because to the Crow people, the number four is sacred.

I woke up and smiled to myself, then thought, *now wait a minute, this is not supposed to happen. A Clan aunt or uncle is supposed to name my child.* I was confused, so I went to my clan uncle, a very respected and well-known person, and shared my dream. He smiled and stated, "Ah, they have named him, Eagle Man is coming, Eagle Man is coming. It is good. We will have a feast and announce his name within the year that he is born."

March 18, 1990, my son was born and on the eighth month of his life, I invited my clan aunts and uncles of the Thick Lodge and Whistling Water clans, along with many other relatives, to a give-away dinner. My brother called upon my clan uncles to come up and share my son's Crow name. Grandpa Tom shared the story of the dream, and stated, "They named him before he was born, and we were told of his coming, so there it is: Eagle Man is here, that is his name, and we will all call him by his given name, *Eagle Man*. He will grow up to be a strong man, with many good things in his life, to carry the wisdom and be of strong heart for his people, till he is a very old man, with children and grandchildren surrounding him."

Another clan uncle of the Whistling Water Clan requested to speak, and he stated, "I have been on this earth for a long time, I've been through the war, traveled to many places, and received my education at Southern Cal University. These good things I ask for my clan son, Eagle Man, and as he grows I shall call him Eagle Boy, and when he reaches young manhood, Eagle Man. And when he grows to an elder, he'll be known as Old Man Eagle."

In this way, my son has been blessed to receive good things in his life and to have a long and prosperous life with family, children, grandchildren, and clan. In the Crow way, richness and wealth come from the blessings and prayers of many relatives and the guidance of clan fathers and mothers. As his mother, I also have a responsibility to share the knowledge of the Crow way of life, and to call his name in the Crow language every morning, to make him a strong person in his heart, spirit and mind."

"Daaxkáasbauchiihe" Eagle Man of the Thick Lodge and Whistling Water Clans of the Crow

Promising Practices: *Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families and Communities:*

A violence prevention, parent-training program

Western Regional Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies

Gun-Free Schools

The Federal Gun-Free Schools Act requires that students found guilty of bringing a firearm to public school must be expelled for one year. Under this law, states must submit data on the number of expulsions in public schools resulting from bringing firearms to school. Data from the 1997-98 school year show:

— Nationally, 3,930 students were expelled for bringing firearms to school;

— 57 percent of expulsions were students in high school, 33 percent were in junior high, and 10 percent were in elementary school;

— 62 percent of the expulsions were for bringing a handgun to school. 7 percent were for bringing a rifle or shotgun, and 31 percent for some other type of firearm; and

— In 48 states reporting on alternative placements, 43 percent of the expelled students were referred to an alternative school or placement.

The number of students expelled in Montana was 17 out of a total public school population of 175,227 (.097 per 1000). Twelve of the Montana incidents involved handguns, one a rifle and four other types of weapons. The number of cases in which the expulsion was shortened to less than a year was nine (53%).

PLUK News — October/November 1999 (page 11). www.pluk.org

Best Practice

Project Venture: National Indian Youth Leadership

Project Venture is a comprehensive prevention program working with American Indian youth from three Peublo and one Navajo community in New Mexico. Using a habilitation service leadership model, the program combines a summer camp and follow-up intergenerational activities designed to increase skills, self-efficiency and community bonding in youth aged 9–13.

The major intervention strategies include summer skill-building leadership camps followed by school- and community-based programs, intertribal activities and training opportunities for youth, parents, school staff and service providers. The activities are designed to: develop skills and self-confidence; build group problem-solving strategies; and create a sense of the power of teamwork. Strategies include community building exercises, hands-on learning, opportunities for reflection, incorporation of appropriate spiritual content, practice of the service ethnic, teaching skills applicable to the home/community setting. At the end of the camp is a rite of passage ceremony that built on traditional ceremonies for coming of age.

Following the summer camp experience, youth are offered a number of activities that go on throughout the year. These include: regular meetings, recreational activities (e.g., canoeing, backpacking, mountain biking), in-school developmental and skill-building activities and community-based learning projects. Youth service projects may include activities such as recycling or working with senior citizens. Science projects have included reclaiming a local lake and its ecology and building a greenhouse. Some PV students have also been trained to serve as mentors.

Interventions emphasize engaging youth in service to get them to invest themselves in the community and reconnect with positive adult role models. The program provides a variety of training opportunities for parents and teachers. While there is no explicit statement of an anti-ATOD message, the program stresses personal and group wellness and involves participants with non-abusing youth and adult role models.

Research Conclusions

Over three years, The American Drug and Alcohol Survey (ADAS) was administered to 850 Project Venture participants and comparison group members. Results indicated a decrease in risk status. Outcome findings also reveal success in lowering rates of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD) abuse by participants in three of the four communities served, as compared to a group of non-participants in the same communities. Community acceptance of the project was indicated by agreement to allow evaluators to test youth in schools. All three communities have made plans to continue programs after the termination of funding.

For more information:

McClellan Hall, Executive Director
NIYLP
P.O. Box 2140
Gallup, NM 87305
http://www.niylp.org

Risk Factor	— Friends who engage in problem behavior — Favorable attitudes toward problem behavior
Protective Factors	— Healthy beliefs and clear standards — Bonding — Opportunities, skills and recognition
Appropriate Target Populations	— Rural — Native American
How to Evaluate 	Assess: — Use rate of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs by participating youth — Change in favorable attitudes toward drug use by participating youth

Rites of Passage: *An American Challenge*

By Murphy Fox, Assistant Professor
Director—Honors Scholars Program, Carroll College

Toward the end of each semester, in each anthropology course, we discuss *rites of passage*. Student responses come slowly at first, then accelerate as they begin to remember –or more accurately as they begin to acknowledge—the rites they have experienced or will experience. They easily pick out the formal hallmarks: birth, puberty, marriage, death—all easily found in any anthropology text. At the heart of the hallmarks lies the cross-cultural belief in life being a path, a road, a journey. We come into life through a dramatic action, are mentored along by kindred who hope we grow into responsible adults while facing many difficulties (and hopefully many joys), before finally facing a temporal end with the possibility of a new beginning. The students see pieces of the path in their own life, and in the lives of those around them, young and old. Finally, they begin to add to the list: starting school, passing from grade to grade, building to building, first hunting or fishing trip with family members, first date, driver's licenses, voting.

The focus of these discussions generally falls upon the individual, with each acknowledging "my rites." This is hardly surprising in American society where the overarching focus is upon the individual. The individual is born, passes through puberty, wrestles with marriage, and confronts death. All true. But this is just a piece of the story as played out through human history, human experience. In our society, we tend to forget the broader context of the rites, and the concomitant responsibility of all those folks who stand at the periphery of the individual's rites.

Take birth. The individual human being bursts into this terrestrial world. Having witnessed my sons being born, I recognize and am amazed at the shock of the rite. Birth resets the world into motion for the individual, and the path, the journey, begins. But clearly, life has broader context stemming from the rite and beginning anew with the rite. The parents travel through their own rites: new roles must be acknowledged and embraced. Mothers must come to see themselves as mothers, and so act as mothers; fathers must come to see themselves as fathers, and so act as fathers. In so doing, parents celebrate the baby's rite of passage while accepting and celebrating their own. Three rites in one, ideally.

And it doesn't stop there. Through this rite of birth, birth orders change, roles change, and sisters and brothers must become new kinds of sisters and brothers, with new sets of responsibilities. The list continues, so the rites continue: cousins, aunts and uncles, and fictive kin.

Still there's more, and perhaps this issue is the most problematic, the most troubling, in contemporary America. A new birth creates new parents. It also creates new grandparents. Though it sounds puerile, grandparents were once parents. As parents, they passed through and hopefully acknowledged their earlier rites of passage. They mentored their children, hoping for the best, wrestling through the various styles of parenting, perhaps lamenting sounding like their own parents all too often. And then the first grandchild arrives; with the grandchild, a new rite of passage. These parents must become grandparents, and therein lies the rub.

The new grandparents were just beginning to enjoy life again. The children were grown and gone, leaving greater fiscal flexibility and allowing postponed journeys to reach various stages of planning. Chronological ages don't seem appropriate for the labels "grandma and grandpa." Nonetheless, the phones ring, and hopefully the shoes fit. Ready or not, the experienced parents, while remaining parents, suddenly become grandparents.

In those cultures that might be described as traditional societies, in human history and in the contemporary world, grandparents are important. They are pri-

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Sound familiar?

Informal Rites of Passage . . .

—First day of kindergarten
—First overnight stay with a friend
—Baptism, christening or confirmation
—Bar or Bat Mitzvahs
—Hunters safety classes
—Hunting with Dad
—Grade and middle school graduations
—Learner's permit
—Driving alone
—First nylons, lipstick and high heels
—First dance
—First kiss
—Vision quests
—First time dancing at a Pow Wow
—Voting
—Registration for the draft
—First job
—Acceptance to college or trade school
—High school graduation

An American Challenge

Continued from Page 15

grandparents are important. They are primary caregivers, mentors and confidants. It's easy to see why; they have the time. Parents are busy learning to be parents, balancing the roles of wife, husband, mother, father, and laborers. So grandparents are called into primary roles. They have won experience: knowledge in language, stories, songs, prayers, trials and travails, the intimate details of life. The grandchildren become the beneficiaries of these bodies of knowledge.

But American society faces complex obstacles surrounding these traditional roles. Increased longevity, more secure fiscal circumstances, class ascendancy, distance created by our mobile society . . . all seem to run counter to this important rite of passage into grand-parenthood. An dour grandchildren lose.

Still, not all American elders succumb to egocentric modernity. Watch the soccer fields, or any other little-league sporting fields or courts, and count the celebrating grandparents. Hear their cheers. Attend the pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school pageants, plays, and graduations, and watch the eyes of the involved grandparents. Wonder and celebration live in those eyes. Look, too, for the aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings, and family friends. These settings all celebrate the context and spirit of being human.

The primary challenge in American society is to recognize the rites of passage that seem to hide in the rush for tomorrow. Once recognized, the rites are acknowledged, and once acknowledged, celebrated. These celebrations give meaning to life, grant purpose, bring responsibility to life. They make the path of life smoother, more worthwhile, and rewarding (Beck197). The celebrations of rites of passage remind us as humans that we are not alone, even in the most profound and solitary moments of human experience. The celebrations serve as periodic reminders within the human family that we're all in this together, sharing this path called life.

Note: For a supplemental reading consider a text used in many Native American Studies classes—specifically chapter 8: The Path of Life, and chapter 9: Girl's Puberty Ceremonies in The Sacred, by Beck, Walters and Francisco, 1977, Navajo Community College Press, ISBN: 0-912586-74-5, as referenced above. Of course any introduction to cultural anthropology text could provide more details on other cultures' rite of passage.

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***Rites of Passage** often center around ceremonies that mark a person's progress from one role, phase of life, or social status to another. The basic life changes include birth, puberty, marriage, and death. Each change is marked by a transitional period involving specific rituals: removal of the individual from his or her former status; suspension from normal social contact; and readmission into society in the newly-acquired status. This transitional process sometimes provides others with the opportunity to adjust to the event, as, for example, the death of a loved one. Rites of passage occur in all societies, often involve symbolism, ultimately, they reaffirm the values of a society.*

2001 National Alcohol Screening Day

Looking for a new way to help individuals with alcohol problems in your community? You are invited to participate in the 3rd annual National Alcohol Screening Day (NASD) on April 5, 2001.

NASD is a collaboration of Screening for Mental Health (SMH) with the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT). NASD is an outreach, education and screening program that raises awareness about alcohol misuse and moves individuals with alcohol problems into treatment or intervention. NASD is easy to implement and can be tailored to the specific needs of your community. This pas April, an estimated 52,000 individuals attended NASD 2000 events at 1,136 community and college screening sites across the nation.

Through this program it is possible to target built-in audiences, such as patients and visitors in hospital lobbies or students at campus gathering spots. Screenign can also be held in high-traffic areas in the community such as at health fairs and in fitness clubs, supermarkets and bookstores. Promote NASD screenings as a way to learn about alcohol's effect on health, work performance and relationships.

For more information call the NASD office at (781) 239-0071 or download the registration form by going to www.mental healthscreening.org/cadca.

A Grass Roots Solution to Juvenile Criminal Activity

By Janet Meissner, MS, CHES, Executive Director, Alliance for Youth

Many youth who have experienced low-level, first brushes with the law may be experimenting with criminal activity in pursuit of a sense of belonging or in an attempt to establish an adult identity. Gang membership can also fill a void by providing a sense of belonging or family; gang initiation rituals often require proof of a completed theft. In other instances, criminal activity may be equate with an effort to prove adult status or to gain acceptance with an older peer group.

Great Falls came to recognize the need for meaningful, effective judicial intervention that involves youth and families, particularly for those youth who have committed low-level or first offenses. Youth councils are particularly effective with first time offenders. For this reason, the Community Youth Justice Council (CYJC) was formed and began operation in Great Falls in May 1996.

Cascade County youth and their families, if eligible, can receive the help of the community through the CYJC Program. The program provides first and second-time misdemeanor and minor felony offender youth and their families with a community-based alternative to the traditional juvenile justice system. The CYJC diverts youth from the traditional justice system and allows them to work with trained community volunteers. The volunteers assess the contributing factors that led to the offense and impose appropriate to the offense. The CYJC Program is a direct extension of the Youth Court. All youth who fail to comply are referred to a District Court Judge. The judge inquires as to the reasons for non-compliance, at which point the case may or may not be referred back to the CYJC Program.

The Community Youth Justice Council Program works by holding youth directly accountable for their actions, and by putting a community component back into the criminal justice system. Councils assign meaningful consequences to the youth, and in some cases to the parents and/or guardians. The goal is to enable the youth to gain understanding of the impact of their actions on their families, their community . . . and themselves. The council may require the youth to pay restitution, volunteer through a community agency, receive a behavior health assessment, or fulfill other dispositions deemed appropriate. During the three and one-half years the councils have been in operation, over 100 distinct consequences have been applied. On average, councils assigned 3.2 consequences per youth. The most commonly utilized in order of decreasing magnitude were: community service, restitution, essay writing, apology letters, counseling, additional assessment, and anger management.

The Effect

Five hundred youth cases were assessed between January 1, 1998 and August 1, 1999, using a control and an experimental group. The cases were reviewed to determine if the CYJC experience had any quantifiable, measurable impact on participants. Data illustrated the following results.

Behavior Measured	Youth Court Services 1st Offenders	CYJC Program 1st Offenders	Youth Court Services—Youth w/Prior Offenses	CYJC Program Youth w/Prior Offenses
Recidivism rates	Not available	45%	76%	55%
Average # of re-offenses	Not available	2.2	5+	3.4
Interval between offenses	Not available	3.9 months	5 months	4.2 months
% Cases w/community service as disposition	N/A	N/A	5%	66%
% Cases w/restitution as dispoition	N/A	N/A	N/A	30%
% Cases w/warning/no action as disposition	N/A	N/A	70%	0%

Anecdotal reports also illustrate the impact. One youth who completed the program submitted the following statement, *"They try very had to understand you and what is going on in your life."* Another participant reported, *"They helped me set goals and gave me the courage to accomplish them."* Parents have also testified*: "They answered the questions I had and their referrals got my son the help he needed."* Another said, *"Since going through the CYJC I have seen a lot of positive changes in my son's daily behavior—he is more mature and responsible."*

Speaking of Snakes

By Pat Carrick, Nurse Practitioner, Family Planning Clinic, Dillon

"You can't talk of the dangers of snake poisoning and not mention snakes." *Dr. C. Everett Koop, US Surgeon General. 1986.*

Taking charge of our reproductive health is a huge milestone. Certainly, making responsible decisions is a good first step to leading healthy, empowered lives. With these axioms in mind, we try very hard to communicate a sense of choice and personal control at the Family Planning Clinic in Dillon.

Dillon has a population that hovers around 4,500; the clinic currently serves about 375 unduplicated patients annually through our part-time program. The Family Planning Clinic has been in place for more than twelve years, and started as a satellite of the Bridger Clinic in Bozeman. Independent funding was awarded three years ago through Title 10, a federal program designed to help prevent unplanned pregnancies.

Some of our younger clients come to us with only a rudimentary understanding of the reproductive process. A matter-of-fact, non-judgmental attitude is crucial to reaching these clients. Though most have had mandatory reproductive education through their schools, some teachers are less comfortable than others in conveying this information. Discomfort can make the situation difficult for all concerned. The young people who have had the benefit of sexual education from teachers who are well-informed and comfortable are clearly better off when the time comes to make their own choices.

The majority of people we serve are women. One of our biggest hurdles can be making a woman aware that she does not *have* to take on the role of victim in her own life, that she can take charge by accepting her inherent decision-making power. It is not unusual to see a young woman take on a passive role in terms of her sexuality. When we see that, we try very hard to communicate to her that she is worthy of respect—from her partner and from herself. Key to success is making her aware that the exercise of her sexuality is her choice alone.

On one level, we provide clinical services geared to family planning. Those services are confidential, provided on a sliding scale, individually tailored, and available to anyone of reproductive age. Title 10 clinics provide physical examinations and help clients decide what they want to do about pregnancy prevention. Those who receive an exam are also asked to provide a health history.

When soliciting a health history, a range of prevention-oriented questions are asked, many about sexual partners, some about drug use. In trying to increase the level of awareness, we take a look at the answers provided, then reiterate questions to promote understanding and to open conversations that might shed light on unsafe practices. By providing screening, we also help prevent the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs). At the end of the exam, we dispense appropriate contraception on a sliding scale.

Since the pill can cost as much as $35/month, many of our clients would not be able to afford it without help. Often we find ourselves providing services to those who otherwise would not have access to health care, annual exams or contraception.

Our program has tried in a variety of ways to make our family-planning services known. We have held classes, gone to high schools, health fairs, and have networked with other area programs. A series of parent/child workshops designed for preadolescent youth and their parents was lots of fun. During those workshops, we provided information on body function changes and sexual function, all from a very low-key, unloaded posture.

There are a number of rites of passage that separate one chapter from the next in our lives. Our service is designed to empower and educate, to provide the tools and support necessary to prevent unplanned pregnancies. Making reproduction a *choice* is one of the most important rites of passage, and one that stands as a milestone between childhood and adulthood. Through our services at the Family Planning Clinic, we do our best to make sure that the milestone is one that begins a safe and healthy journey.

Oakland, California—A blueprint for Federal, State and local action to help children exposed to violence was unveiled recently by Deputy Attorney General Eric H. Holder. "Safe From the Start: Taking Action on Children Exposed to Violence" offers general principles and specific suggestions for helping children who were victims of or witnesses to violence. It also provides examples of effective programs and lists of available resources.

"We know that when children are exposed to violence repeatedly, the consequences can be severe and long-lasting," said Holder. "Although we understand the problem, protecting children can be difficult. Many different elements - from law enforcement to social services—get involved in these cases. But no one discipline by itself can see the complete picture, and as a result, many children don't get the full range of services and support they need."

Resource:

Copies of ***"Safe From the Start: Taking Action on Children Exposed to Violence"*** *and information about other OJJDP publications, programs and conferences are available through the OJJDP Web site at http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ or the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse at 1-800-638-8736.*

It's a Girl Thing / It's a Guy Thing:

Assisting Parents and Children with Adolescent Sexual Development

Jackie L. Lloyd, M.S. Director of Education, InterMountain Planned Parenthood and Ernesto A. Randolfi, Ph.D., Associate Professor, MSU-Billings

Early adolescence is filled with many firsts: the first day of middle school, the first kiss, the first menstrual period or wet dream, and often the first experimentation with alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. For most pre-teens, early adolescence is a time of rapid and confusing transition. Physical bodies take on adult characteristics and become able to reproduce. Emotionally, thoughts begin to focus on physical intimacy and concerns over normalcy. Socially, peer relations become central to achieving identity and acceptance.

At the same time, pre-teens must learn to deal with the competing influences of the popular media, schools, communities and families. New opportunities for freedom—increased independence and added responsibilities—result in more choices. For teens nd pre-teens trying to find themselves while simultaneously making healthy choices, this can be an especially difficult time.

This period of time is also critical because many adult health behavior patterns originate during the formative teenage years. The same can be said for attitudes and behaviors about sexuality. Unhealthy relationships and sexual risk-taking are prime examples of behaviors that originate in the developmental years. Some children will navigate this passage successfully, others will not be so fortunate.

Prevention professionals design and implement many educational strategies geared to assisting these age groups in formulating healthy, life-long behaviors. Often-neglected allies can be parents, who exert a powerful influence. Research confirms that children are less likely to be involved in unhealthy practices if significant adults deliver and model consistently healthy messages. Although we know that the most important adult is the child's parent, we do little to assist people in developing the knowledge and skills needed to become effective parents.

Like their children, parents experience many firsts and transitions as they watch a child enter the teen years. A son or daughter who suddenly seems distant and moody presents new communication challenges. Communication becomes even more complicated when issues of sexuality are introduced. For many in our society, learning about sexuality can be confusing and somewhat embarrassing. Opportunities to formally address issues of sexual development are infrequent, and when teachable moments do arise, many parents feel ill equipped to discuss emerging sexuality.

In survey after survey, teens consistently indicate that they prefer to learn about sexuality from their parents. Teens also indicate that parents do not talk to them enough and that they feel uncomfortable with *the talk*. On the other hand, parents often feel that they lack the knowledge and communication skills necessary to be their child's primary resource for sexuality education. The truth is, we all make mistakes in our efforts to communicate about sexuality with our children. Still, parents have a huge advantage in knowing their child better than anyone else. Additionally, parents truly are better equipped than anyone else to communicate family values.

For parents who would like to gain more in-depth information and practical skills, InterMountain Planned Parenthood has developed gender specific workshops for parents and their preteens. The emphasis is parent-child communication skills combined with accurate sexuality information. These interactive workshops are designed to meet needs through large group, paired activities, as well as separate parent and child discussion sessions.

When parents arrive at the workshops with a sometimes-reluctant daughter or son in tow, the room is usually filled with tension and apprehension. Imagine being in a group of strangers

Continued on Page 20

Examples of online resources for parents and professionals:

The Alan Guttmacher Institute
http://www.agi-usa.org

The American Social Health Association
http://www.ashastd.org/

Healthwise
http://www.alice.columbia.edu/

The Network for Family Life Education
http://www.sxetc.org/

Planned Parenthood
http://www.plannedparenthood.org

The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S.
http://www.siecus.org

TeenWire
http://www.teenwire.com

Train the Trainers

For professionals interested in providing this program in their communities, IMPP is offering *It's a Girl Thing/It's a Guy Thing Train the Trainers*. This one day training will provide the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to facilitate these popular growing up workshops. The training will be held Friday, April 6, 2001 at the IMPP Billings-Downtown location. There is a registration fee of $95.00 with scholarships available. Call Jackie for more information or to register: 248-3636.

Girl Thing / Guy Thing

Continued from Page 19

and in the presence of your child, knowing that you will be asked to discuss some of life's most personal and intimate matters. Needless to say, considerable time is devoted to activities designed to increase the comfort level of all participants. Introductions are made, ground rules set and a series of warm-up or boundary-breaking activities are introduced.

The workshops are divided into three sections. The first section is devoted to enhancing communication skills; parent and preteens discuss, practice, and role-play. Demonstrations and scenarios utilize themes that revolve around adolescent issues. As an example, after discussing various aspects of positive or negative communication styles, parents describe an embarrassing moment from their own early adolescence to their child, utilizing effective communication skills. At the same time, the preteen is asked to model reflective listening skills.

In the second section, a film on puberty is shown, followed by interactive learning activities used to address issues discussed in the film. These activities include information on the physical changes that occur during puberty, but equal time is spent on the emotional feelings and social behaviors that accompany these physical changes. Parents are asked to reflect on their own early adolescence to help their children understand that their parents went through similar changes.

Although most of the workshop keeps parent and child together, during the final segment, parents and pre-teens meet with separate facilitators in order to discuss relevant peer issues. For parents, this is a time to share concerns and ideas with other parents. It also allows the opportunity to address specific concerns without embarrassing their child. For pre-teens, this provides an opportunity to pose questions to qualified health professionals and to talk candidly with other pre-teens about what is happening in their lives.

It is not possible to address every possible parent-child scenario within one three-hour workshop, but the goal is to open the door for future discussions. Parent and child both receive a packet of resource materials that can be read and discussed at a later time, and are issued an invitation to call for further assistance. At the conclusion of the workshop, it is not uncommon to see pre-teens smiling and interacting with new friends, often exchanging phone numbers. Almost inevitably, parents and children talk freely and continue to ask questions even after the workshop is over.

Rites of passage *focus on the life cycle. Inevitably, birth, coming of age, marriage and death are marked by rites of passage that create a transition from one stage to the next. By choice or by chance an individual may not participate in each stage (for example choosing not to marry, or dying prematurely), but the experience of participating in one's own or others' rites of passage is universal. Americans of diverse ethnic heritage have maintained, lost, revived, and reinvented rites of passage as their values and life-styles have changed, because their need for structure and continuity has remained constant.*

The Northwest Substance Abuse Prevention Conference sponsored by the Oregon Partnership (OP) and the Oregon Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking (OCRUD) will feature national leaders and highlight cutting-edge prevention strategies.

When: May 3 & 4

Where: Oregon Convention Center in Portland

For more information contact:

Kaleen Deatherage
Community Affairs Director, Oregon Partnership
6443 BVTN—Hillsdale Highway, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97221-4230
(800) 282-7035
kdeatherage@orpartnership.org

Wakina Sky Learning Circle and Library

By Marcia Diaz, Co-director

Wakina Sky Learning Circle and Library is one of Montana's most ethnically-diverse educational sites, serving youth and families who come from Montana's eight tribes, as well as from out-of-state tribes. Its staff and volunteers are also diverse, with ethnicities that include a variety of Native affiliations, as well as African, Asian, Hispanic and white. Given such diversity, the program *must* stress cultural commonalties. Regardless of background, there's a strong consensus at Wakina Sky that high school completion is necessary, serving as a positive *rite of passage*.

High school completion is the accumulation of years of work and experience, and while graduation may be the end goal, a myriad of appropriate steps must to be taken along the way. On a daily basis, Wakina Sky engages and supports youth in these steps. In striving to overcome barriers associated with the high dropout rate of its youth, Wakina utilizes a multidimensional approach, engaging its youth in a variety of educational, social, cultural and recreational activities while providing healthy mentors. It seeks to enhance Native pride, while promoting academics and technological advancement. In addition, it has incorporated a "talking circle" as a substance abuse prevention activity. Led by a certified counselor, this activity provides a supportive setting in which problems can be processed and healthy solutions proposed.

Drawing upon traditional tribal wisdom, we believe:

(a) all children are valuable in and of themselves, worthy of attention and nurturing by their peers and the elders of the community.

(b) all children are capable of learning particular skills, which build upon themselves. All must learn certain necessary basics, yet have the freedom to participate in educational activities that hold special interest for them.

(c) elders are important to the healthy development of children. They must hold positions of respect and function in a capacity through which they transmit traditional wisdom, practical knowledge and skills. An unfortunate characteristic of modern society is age stratification in our educational, social, recreational and living arrangements. As a result, a great deal of wisdom and caring are lost.

(d) a sense of traditional values and heritage promote the dignity and positive group identification necessary for healthy self esteem.

The academic difficulties encountered by Native children in America's educational system are complex. They stem from poverty, geographic mobility, discrimination and other factors. One of the most tragic causal roots lies in a history that includes boarding schools. Not so long ago, white educators coercively removed Native children from their families and tribes and transported them to boarding schools for the sake of education. Families were broken up, and children estranged from their parents and relatives. Children were often told their parents were dead to prevent them from running away. As a result, they were deprived of the nurturing family bonds all children need. Often children were subjected to corporal punishment, incompatible with their former upbringing. Cultural identity was disregarded, as demonstrated by such activies as the forceful cutting of hair. One Wakina elder remembers her father kidnapping her brother and herself from a boarding school in Arizona, then hiding the family in the desert in order to avoid losing his children again. Another Wakina elder's mother was struck across the mouth for speaking her Chippewa tongue. These forms of mistreatment, associated early on with formal education, still linger in the minds of many Native families.

Wakina Sky, as an after-school program, is a supplemental program. It would be inappropriate to think that this program could replace the family or the tribe in providing traditional, secular, and sacred rites of passage. Rather, Wakina provides a unique environment that supports successful passage to maturity. Wakina Sky Learning Circle and Library, now in its fourth year, is having a positive impact within the community. Formal education is a necessary tool, but the pathway to that end must be threaded with dignity so that ensuing challenges can be met with enthusiasm and success.

GEAR UP

The GEAR UP Program (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) encourages disadvantaged young people to pursue high goals, remain in school, and complete coursework suitable for college acceptance. The program administers early college preparation and awareness activities to provide Montana students with comprehensive mentoring, counseling, outreach, and other supportive services. The GEAR UP Program also operates a financial assistance program that awards scholarships to students participating in Montana's higher education system. The program consists of approximately 20 staff and more than 20 cooperating campuses.

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Montana Gear Up Director
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We Know What Works—Let's Just Do It

By Cindy Lewis, M.S., Communications Coordinator
Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program

Experimenting seems to be part of growing up. If tobacco use weren't such a highly addictive, deadly habit, health professionals, parents and teachers wouldn't be so concerned. But it is all those things. Unfortunately, preventing this addiction is proving to be complex and difficult.

In spite of the recent highly publicized failures of youth tobacco use prevention programs, there is cause for optimism. Researchers Melanie Wakefield, Ph.D. and Frank Chaloupka, Ph.D. of the University of Illinois recently reviewed tobacco use prevention programs that have shown success in Arizona, Florida, California, Oregon and Massachusetts. While each program differed considerably, several consistent themes have emerged:

1. ***Comprehensive Programs.*** One of the most critical factors affecting success of tobacco use prevention programs was the comprehensiveness of the program and the degree to which the tobacco industry and competitors for funding undermined it. Programs with adequate funding were able to increase counter advertising, start school-based prevention programs, pass local clean air ordinances and reduce youth access to tobacco products. In other words, a combination of changes were made to the social environment. Wakefield and Chaloupka emphasized that individual tobacco control methods are not independent; they reinforce and strengthen each other beyond what each would have been able to accomplish alone

2. ***Complementary Strategies.*** The outcomes of various strategies differed over time. For instance, models using social influences seemed effective, but only for a short time. When combined with community-based programs or when the messages were reinforced with media counter advertising, their effectiveness was sustained. In another example, restricting access to tobacco has shown to reduce teen tobacco use, but only when reinforced by strong enforcement, community support and involvement. Bans on smoking in other public buildings further decrease opportunities to smoke, and send a strong message to youth that tobacco use is not socially acceptable.

3. ***Bans on Advertising and Promotion.*** Young smokers have been shown to be three times more sensitive to tobacco product advertising than older smokers. Tobacco advertising and promotion appear to have a significant impact on increasing teen use of tobacco, but bans on advertising have only negligible effects on reducing use. The tobacco industry can easily compensate for bans in one medium by increased promotions in another. Big tobacco still spends approximately $22 million annually promoting and advertising their products in Montana alone.

Every day in this country, 3000 more teens and preteens become regular smokers. While tobacco use among teens seems to have stabilized or decreased lately, the number of teens who smoked during the month prior to the 1997 Youth Risk Behavior Survey increased to 36 percent from its 1991 level of 28 percent.

National Youth Gang Survey

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) announces the availability of "1998 National Youth Gang Survey."

The spread of youth gang activity across America has led to increased public concern. In 1995, OJJDP launched a series of annual surveys to facilitate analysis of changes and trends in the nature of youth gangs and their activities. The fourth in this series, the 1998 National Youth Gang Survey was administered by the National Youth Gang Center to a representative sample of city and county jurisdictions. To facilitate comparative analyses, the 1998 survey used the same sample as its 1996 and 1997 predecessors.

This Summary provides the results of the 1998 survey, which indicate that the percentage of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs decreased from the previous year, from 51 percent in 1997 to 48 percent in 1998. An estimated 780,200 gang members were active in 28,700 youth gangs in 1998, a decrease from the previous year's figures of 816,000 and 30,500 respectively.

This Report is also available online at http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/gang.html#nygs

For full-text publications, information on OJJDP or JJC, and other juvenile justice information, visit the following:

OJJDP World Wide Web page at http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/

NCJRS World Wide Web page at http://www.ncjrs.org/

Jobs for Montana's Graduates

There is no question that a first job can serve as an entry point between childhood and the responsibilities of the adult world.

Jobs for Montana's Graduates (JMG), created in April 1990, assists Montana high school students to stay in school, graduate and then to successfully transition from school to work. Starting in July 1999, JMG partnered with the Montana National Guard to assist high school dropouts enrolled in the Montana Youth ChalleNGe program to gain their GEDs and to move into meaningful careers. The methods used to operate this program include a unique combination of in- and out-of-school services provided by a career/job specialist. JMG is currently offered at 42 sites, including 33 high schools, 7 alternative schools, and 2 out-of school programs—the Montana National Guard Youth Challenge and the Yellowstone Youth Academy.

JMG is affiliated with the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program. JAG originated in Delaware in 1979 and has been successfully replicated in 28 states and territories, in over 725 schools, and in 400 communities. JAG has a proven record of success: it is the nation's longest-running, most consistently applied school-to-work transition model.

JMG's mission:

1) to provide classroom instruction, remediation and work-based learning opportunities to students in grade nine through twelve and high school dropouts ages 16-18, geared to enhancing career awareness, self-esteem and work readiness.
2) to identify young people who can benefit the most though participating in JMG and prepare them for meaningful career-oriented jobs, matching students with community job opportunities and providing long-term follow-up to facilitate successful transition from school to work.

Key elements of JMG:

— Employability skills curriculum: competency-based instruction including units on career planning and decision-making, job seeking, job retention, basic academics, leadership and self-development and personal skills.

— Montana Career Association: a motivational student organization, which fosters the development of self-esteem, leadership, decision-making and assertiveness skills and provides recognition for positive achievement.

— Job development and placement: meaningful job opportunities with advancement potential are matched with job-ready, motivated graduates involved in the program.

— Post graduation follow-up: graduates and their employers are provided twelve months of follow-up assistance to facilitate students' successful transitions into the labor market.

— Active partnership between government, labor, business, education and the community.

Results

Performance outcomes for the class of 1998-1999 include:

— 90.2% of JMG students graduate

— 87.8% of the graduates enter employment, the military or post-secondary education

— 82.76% of non-seniors return to school

— $5.91 average wage at placement

Long-term goals

Long-term goals include establishing JMG in 50 schools by the end of the school year 2001-2002. Schools implementing JMG may be eligible for start-up grants of up to $7,000. For more information, please contact Lorelee Robinson, State Coordinator, at (406) 444-2534.

Target population

— Students having difficulty staying in school.

— Students needing career exploration to identify a career path.

— Seniors most likely to be unemployed at graduation.

— Students who:
  - are frequently absent or suspended from school;
  - have little or no work experience;
  - have limited social and communications skills;
  - score average or below academically;
  - have no specific plans after high school graduation;
  - are at least one year behind their modal grade;
  - have friends with limited educational expectations (i.e., do not expect to graduate from high school or have already dropped out).

— Students enrolled in the Montana Youth ChalleNGe program:
  - have dropped out of high school; and are
  - age 16-18.

Resource

NCJRS National Criminal Justice Reverence Service Online Ordering System.

This is one of the best government resources I've seen. Publications can be ordered or downloaded, and there are also publications, CDs and videos at nominal cost or free for the asking. Try this! It's great. http://puborder.ncjrs.org/

Day Minder

February 22

Bridging the Generations: Surviving Loss after Suicide
Holiday Inn-Parkside, Missoula
For more information: Call the Mental Health Association of Montana (406) 442-4276 or 1-800-823-MHAM, or e-mail Charles McCarthy at mham@in-tch.com

March 28-30

2001 Annual MT Council for Exceptional Children Conference on disABILITIES

Holiday Inn-Parkside, Missoula
For more information: Call University of Montana Continuing Education (406) 243-2094

May 2-4

Beyond the Walls Conference sponsored by the Mental Health Association of Montana (MHAM) and Alternative Youth Adventures.
Copper King Inn, Butte
For more information: Call the Mental Health Association of Montana at (406) 442-4276 or 1-800-823-MHAM, or visit www.mhamontana.org

July 19-21

6th Annual Rocky Mountain Mental Health Symposium: Teens and Drugs 2001

Grouse Mountain Lodge, Whitefish
Contact Kalispell Regional Medical Center Education Dept. (406)752-1775 for more information

CSAP Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

*A joint publication of the **Prevention Resource Center** and the **Addictive and Mental Disorders Division***

MONTANA Department of Public Health & Human Services

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